

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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Members

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1. Although the screening of SED members and candidates for membership which was initiated in connection with the change of membership books and candidate cards has not as yet been completed, it is already possible to make certain observations upon which to base an evaluation of the SED.
2. The screening revealed that the workers were less informed on Marxism and Leninism than the bourgeois membership. This was considered particularly undesirable in view of the fact that the party dogma prescribes that the working class be the driving spirit in the movement. A report which was submitted by the Central Party Control Commission (ZPKK) in February 1951 indicated that the majority of the workers examined did not even know the party statute. The same report further stated that those workers who had been KPD members prior to 1945 had a surprisingly limited knowledge of Communist ideology. In many instances party members refused to appear for the examination while in others they voluntarily broke with the party rather than appear. In Mecklenburg, for example, about 1,000 new settlers declared their separation from the party.
3. In several Laender the number of workers expelled from the party is greater than the number of expelled bourgeois. For example, in Thuringia 52 percent of those expelled were workers. In its fourth meeting on 15 to 17 March 1951 the SED Central Committee criticized this situation and directed that the expulsion cases be re-examined. Accordingly, in a number of Kreise, all expulsions were annulled and new investigations were instituted. It is believed that in the screenings being accomplished at the present time approximately 30 percent of those expelled are workers.
4. The screening commissions have had varying attitudes toward former Social Democrats in the SED. Occasionally members who had been SPD members since 1919 were expelled or demoted to mere candidates for membership; on the other hand, Walter Ulbricht repeatedly charged the screening commissions with laxity in dealing with cases of SPD members. As in the case of veteran KPD members a large number of these persons also left the party voluntarily. It is now obvious that strong opposition among former SPD members within the SED still exists. Most expulsions occurred in typical SPD strongholds such as Leuna (M 52/D 91), Halberstadt (M 52/D 27) and Magdeburg; however, there

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was no real indication that this weakened the solidarity of these groups.

5. Particularly affected by the screenings were the former members of the Socialist Workers' Party (SAP); this was true in spite of the fact that they were either left wing Social Democrats or right wing Communists and thus rather close to the KPD. A report by the ZPKK commented that large factions of this group still exist, as, for example, in the "Volk und Wissen" publishing house.
6. A large number of persons from former Communist insurgent groups such as former members of the Communist Party Opposition (KPO), the Communist Workers' Party (KAP), and the Lenibund were also expelled. Through questionnaires and personal history statements they were scrupulously screened, particularly with respect to their attitude toward the U.S.S.R. and the Comintern policy. They were not screened by local commissions but rather by Kreis commissions. Ulbricht expressed the belief that former KPO members still formed sizeable cohesive groups particularly in the VVN.
7. Anti-Soviet tendencies were also observed. One report by the ZPKK which was exclusively devoted to such cases stated that these tendencies were noted particularly in large plants and Soviet-controlled corporations (SAC). The report further mentioned that these tendencies were mounting among the workers and expressed the opinion that they resulted from the forced introduction of Soviet working methods.
8. As a result of this screening program between 20 and 25 percent of the SED membership has been purged. This represents a loss of about 500,000 members. Present statistics indicate that the cadre of the SED now being formed will consist of about 10,000 Communists who prior to 1945 worked in underground and other illegal activities. To this figure will be added an approximate additional 10,000 members who for the most part come from the FDJ. This cadre will control virtually the entire political, economic, and cultural life in the German Democratic Republic.

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